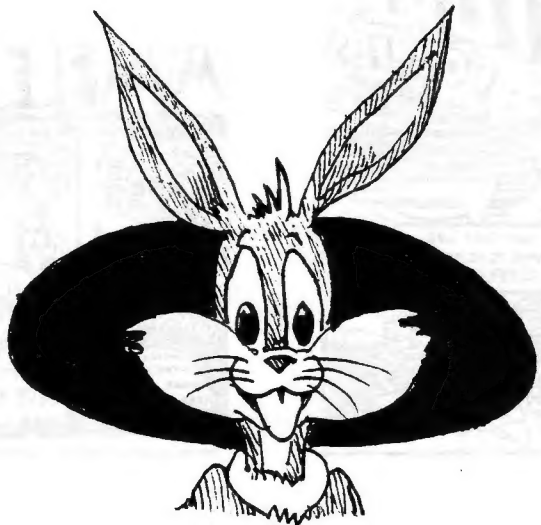
COMIX WORLD 233. June 1984. © Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Subs: $6 for 24, $11 for 48. This issue is dedicated to Bob Clampett to whom I owe a lifetime of inspiration and good humor. Bob passed away on May 2 of this year in Detroit, Michigan. He was there on a promotional tour concerning the release of his Beany and Cecil cartoons on cassette tape. Born May 8, 1913, Bob was just short of 70. His was a full and active life.

I met him for the first time by the pool in the courtyard of the El Cortez Hotel in 1973. I have to confess to being a total groupie at that moment, more than a little excited about meeting the man who, more than anyone else, has inspired me to draw cartoons and spend my life involved in comics and comic-related activities. The first characters I copied as a boy were Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig and I remember doing a chalk talk in the third grade about the three little pigs and using Porky as the model for all three. When I met Bob, he was signing pictures of Bugs Bunny. Now this particular bunny wasn't the weird little character Clampett came up with for the rabbit hunt cartoons of late thirties; it was the sleek bunny designed by Robert McKimson in the forties. Bob's own bunny had come from a number of places, one of them IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT, a movie which starred Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert, one of the genre later referred to as "screwball comedies. The cartoons had for many years been used to plug songs from hit movies and the animators were used to using movies as their take-off point when putting together storyboards for the cartoons, so, Bob told me, he saw Clark Gable eating that carrot by the side of the road and his pose became one of Bugs' favorties. Clampett, along with his peers, Tex Avery, Fritz Freleng, Hugh Harmon, Rudy Ising, was one of the principal animation directors during the golden age of the form, the 1930s and early 40s. He started at Warner Brothers in 1931 and worked mainly on Porky Pig in the thirties. Porky, at first, was a little fat pig called Pork (the early characters were Pork and Beans, Ham and X); as time passed, he was streamlined (a favorite term in the 30s, one which referred to a predominant technological and architectural style) to become the character as shown on my logo above. The early Bugs Bunny (circa 1938) was more like Daffy Duck and the bunny one sees now on the t-v specials is more McKimson & Chuck Jones than Clampett. Bob resisted rationalism in his work. Whenever I think of his early stuff like PORKY IN WACKYLAND, I think of Dada and Surrealism, even Cubism and a trace of Fauvism. Anything could happen in a Clampett cartoon, but not in one by Jones. The plots of the later Bunny cartoons like those of Jones' own Road Runners and Pepe Le Pew's are pretty predictable from conflict to chase to resolution; when we get to the Road Runner with it's predictability and repetitive sight gags, we are a long way from the mad world of Bob Clampett in WACKYLAND or even COAL BLACK AND DE SEBBEN DWARFS. Actually, you couldn't even do the type of race cartoon Clampett did these days. Bob told me that Blacks always loved his cartoons and told him so, but in the post Civil Rights U. S., it became impossible to poke fun at them and the result was that they disappeared from the cartoons for a long time. Clampett loved satire and he would put in anything that he felt fit. He liked sexual humor and he would put that in, too. He said he always put in a lot of things, because he knew the censors would take out something, but not everything, so they did, but he wound up with a better cartoon.

Animation is and will always be a team effort. No one is going to draw the thousands of cells it takes to make a cartoon or feature. The guys on Termite Terrace who worked with Bob had a good time at their work. There was creative competition, but there was close friendship, too. and everytime I saw Bob show his slides and talk about the old days at a convention he spoke of his gang with affection. That's what Bob was doing when I met him. He had put together a slide show on the history of animation and he was touring campuses with it. I booked him into the University of California in Berkeley and we did Animation Day in 1975. This event had good effects on the academy; it stimulated future animation events like Chuck Jones workshop a few years after, not to mention a repeat of Bob's show at the U. C. Medical Center in San Francisco. Bob was always a hit at a convention. His cartoons were an upper. Sody Clampett, his wife, was always with him, a warm, wonderful lady, who ran the cartoons and helped time the program as Bob gave his talk, a good partner.

A memorial service was held for Bob on May 8, 1984, at the Church of the Hills. It was conducted by Dr. Gene Emmet Clark. Len Maltin and Tom Feinstein spoke at the service. Bob's marker is at Forest Lawn in the Hollywood Hills. He is one of the great elder statesmen of living comic art, and, while we mourn his loss deeply on a personal level, we know there are millions of people out there turning on their television sets to see this funny little yellow bird look up and say, "I tawt I taw a putty tat." Most of them don't know Bob Clampett's name, but all of them, like you and me, will always have a part of him deep in their hearts.

-CLAY GEERDES
Berkeley, California
May 18, 1984



NEWAVES: Matt Feazell has a pair of new ones: CYNICALMAN 10 and STUPID BOY 2. 25/stamp each from him, Box 5803, Raleigh, N C 27650.* Minis have infiltrated the high school set in Minnesota and you can get some even if you are an adult (on the other hand, since these boys are not adults, you need an age statement from them if you trade your x-rateds, so think accordingly. GARDEN COMICS 1 is 40 cents and DR. DISGUSTING 1 is 50 cents from Randy Paske, 656 Birch Lane, Gilbert, MN 55741.* THE COMPLETE SACKER is now available from John Howard and inside he confesses to being from Austin, TX. Get a SACKER from 3454-R Lansdowne Dr., Lexington, KY 40502.* My latest minis are Free Hand's FREE FOLLIES 3, and WEIRD DENTIST 1 (Miller cover, Randy Clark B.C., and innards by me). 50/stamp each from CW.* MUMBLES 3 is $2.71 from John E., POB 7243, Wichita, KS 67218. 36 pages, 8 1/2 x 11, including an interview between John E and Clay Geerdes that will enlighten all.* BRAIN BAT is $1 pp from Xex Graphix, POB 240611, Menphis, TN 38124. CRAZY MEN 3 is 75 pp.* Tom Roberts will send you a free copy of ANTI-SOCIAL JR. Send a 37 cent stamp. 1270 W. Ardmore, Chicago, IL 60660. He says his third full-size issue is in the works.* SKINBOY FIGHTS BACK is $1.50 from Jim Williams, 1418 SE 29th, Portland, ORE 97214. Jim says he'll be down in San Diego partying with us at the big con June 28- Jul 1 at the Hotel San Diego. If you come down, we meet for breakfast in the hotel dining room at 9. Join us.*M. Honeycutt has XCAVATE. 50/stamp. POB 240131, Menphis, TN 38124.* CASUAL CASUAL 11 is $1/37 st from Peter Dako, 536 Richmond St. West, Toronto, Ont., Canada M5V 1Y4.* RAW 6 out.* You can get a free copy of the COMIC BLOCK from Pastime Productions, POB 19818, Portland, ORE 97219.* Lots of Newave ads and comments in FANDOM TIMES. $1 from 18129 136th, Apt 8, Nunica MI 49448.* JOURNEY 9 and CEREBUS 61 now on sale.* I'll be at Creation Con in San Francisco at the Golden Gateway, June 2, 1984. Keep on drawing. C.G.